

# Illegal dumping

## prevention and clean-up

Handbook for  
Aboriginal communities



Department of **Environment & Climate Change** NSW



Cover artwork by Leeanne Hunter of Wiradjuri Aura Graphic Designs.

**Top panel** depicts compost: worms in the centre surrounded by leaves, and sticks and stones in the ground, essential for healthy Country.

**Middle panel** depicts Aboriginal land with bare footprints.

**Top photograph:** Barriers including boulders and a locked gated installed on land owned by Ngunnawal Local Aboriginal Land Council, Queanbeyan, to prevent illegal dumping.

Photo: Z. Thomas, DECC.

**Middle photograph:** Community Development Employment Project participants clean up land owned by Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council, Menai. Photo: B. Graham, courtesy Sutherland Shire Council.

**Bottom photograph:** Totem poles painted by members of Coomaditchie Artists Cooperative, Port Kembla, as a reminder of Aboriginal presence on the land.

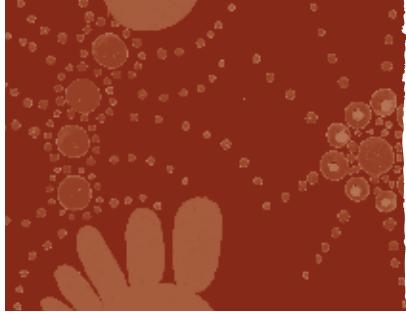
Photo: Z. Thomas, DECC.

Please note that some of the photographs in this publication may contain images of people who are now deceased.

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## Foreword



The Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW (DECC) is committed to helping Aboriginal people to protect, practice and promote their culture and heritage.

DECC believes that the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people are intertwined with the protection of the environment. This relationship might be summed up as *healthy Country, healthy culture, healthy community*.

Illegally dumped waste affects the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal communities by disturbing their cultural values, and Aboriginal people's relationship with Country.

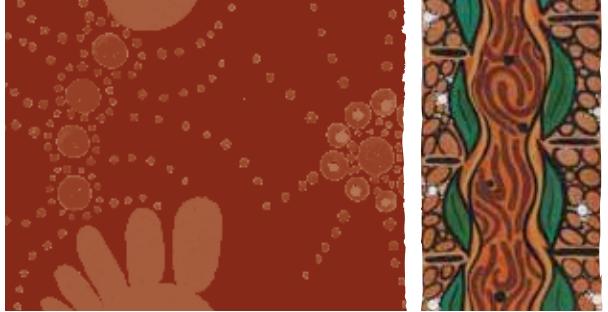
As the first people of Australia, Aboriginal people have inherent rights that were never given away. These inherent rights recognise Aboriginal peoples' custodial interests in Country, including the unique responsibility to care for the landscape of NSW (i.e. the natural environment and its resources).

Respecting and acting on Aboriginal peoples' inherent rights strengthens and renews Aboriginal culture and physical wellbeing, and provides opportunities for socio-economic development.

I am pleased to present *Illegal dumping prevention and clean-up: handbook for Aboriginal communities*. This handbook is designed to support Aboriginal people in caring for Country by recommending actions to prevent illegal dumping and to clean up waste.

**Lisa Corbyn**  
**Director General**  
**Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW**





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## Chapter One: **Introduction**

This handbook aims to help Aboriginal communities plan, gain funding for and undertake projects that prevent illegal waste dumping and enable the clean-up of lands where dumping has occurred.

In 2003, the Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW (DECC) liaised with 55 NSW Aboriginal communities about environmental issues affecting Aboriginal people. Waste was identified as the most common issue affecting communities, and illegal waste dumping was highlighted as a particular problem.

Illegal dumping is an ongoing and highly visible problem in NSW. It can occur in city and country areas and on public and privately-owned land. Aboriginal land is particularly susceptible to illegal dumping because it is often located in remote areas.

This handbook was developed to help Aboriginal communities to stop illegal dumping happening, and clean up illegally dumped waste. This handbook will help communities to:

- understand the impacts of illegal waste dumping on Country
- develop partnerships to tackle waste dumping
- obtain funding to undertake projects that prevent and clean up dumped waste
- report illegal dumping activities to authorities
- put in place measures to stop waste dumping
- undertake clean-up activities safely.

The handbook contains:

- information on where and why people illegally dump waste (see Chapter 2)
- a step-by-step guide on preventing further dumping and cleaning up waste (see Chapter 3)
- detailed case studies on two pilot projects undertaken by Gandangara and Ngunnawal Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) to clean up dumped waste and prevent further dumping (see Chapter 4)
- further reading materials and contact details (see Chapter 5)
- an illegal dumping checklist, a reporting form, a sample press release and an example of a log sheet to track progress (see Appendices).

The information in this handbook is summarised in a 13-minute DVD which is attached to the inside back cover. Extra DVDs are available from DECC's Environment Line – phone 131 555. The DVD also contains interviews with people involved in the pilot projects profiled in Chapter 4.

Photo: Z. Thomas, DECC



Illegally dumped domestic waste



**Table 1: Illegal dumping at a glance**

<b>What is dumped?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• household waste</li><li>• refrigerators, washing machines, furniture and computers</li><li>• bricks, concrete, timber and asbestos</li><li>• tree stumps, branches and lawn clippings</li><li>• car bodies and tyres</li><li>• chemical drums and other industrial waste</li></ul>
<b>Where is it dumped?</b>	<p><b>Bush</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• roadsides</li><li>• bushland</li><li>• waterways and river systems</li><li>• remote properties</li><li>• public land such as national parks and Crown land</li><li>• private land such as land owned by LALCs</li></ul> <p><b>City</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• alleyways</li><li>• nature strips</li><li>• poorly-lit areas</li><li>• car parks</li><li>• city parks</li><li>• private land such as land owned by LALCs</li></ul>
<b>Who dumps it?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• householders</li><li>• waste transporters</li><li>• businesses</li><li>• builders</li><li>• demolishers</li></ul>
<b>Why do they dump it?</b>	<p><b>Avoid costs</b> (providing they don't get caught!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• unwillingness to pay waste disposal costs</li><li>• landowners allow illegal dumping for a small fee or as a favour</li></ul> <p><b>Convenience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• waste facilities too far away</li><li>• collection services not often enough or not advertised</li><li>• waste disposal considered too expensive</li></ul> <p><b>Uncaring attitude</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lack of community pride</li><li>• lack of respect for the law, land and people</li></ul>



## Chapter Two:

# Consequences of illegal dumping on Country

## Damage to land, waters and Aboriginal culture

Illegally dumped waste can poison the soil and kill vegetation, including bush tucker and medicinal plants. Waste may destroy bushland and prevent the vegetation from regenerating and animals from returning. Some waste, such as tyres and certain chemicals, can be a fire hazard.

Dumped waste can alter the normal way water runs over the land by blocking watercourses and causing the soil to erode more quickly. When it rains, the water that drains out of waste may contain chemicals that poison the soil, and pollute water sources such as creeks and drinking water supplies.

Dumped waste can harm culturally significant or sacred sites such as scarred trees, middens, burial sites, ceremonial grounds and natural springs.

**Illegal dumping** – the disposal of waste on land without necessary approvals from authorities. It may vary from small bags of rubbish in a city lane to larger scale dumping of waste in bushland. It is a crime which pollutes the environment, poses a health risk and is unsightly.

Some landholders may allow people to dump waste on their property in return for money or as a favour. This practice is illegal as approvals to dispose of waste are needed from the local council, and sometimes DECC.



Photo: T. Wilson, DECC

Illegally dumped paint and chemical drums



## Health risks to the community

Illegally dumped waste may contain dangerous objects such as metal sheets, nails and sharp objects which can cause injuries. Waste can also contain chemicals, asbestos and dust that can harm the health of anyone who lives nearby or visits the area.

Some illegally dumped waste can smell and attract rodents, insects and other vermin that are a risk to people's health. Warm stagnant water standing in waste tyres provides an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Areas affected by illegal dumping are unattractive and people may no longer want to live in, connect with or visit them. Illegally dumped waste harms Country by disturbing the community's connection with it and its ability to provide fresh drinking water and bush tucker.

## Expense of clean-up activities

Cleaning up dumped waste can be expensive. Illegally dumped waste can attract further dumping and other criminal activities such as graffiti and arson.

People that illegally dump waste are legally responsible for cleaning it up. However, if the dumpers cannot be found, the owner(s) or occupier(s) of the land bear the clean-up cost. This means that Aboriginal landowners are often responsible for cleaning up illegally dumped waste on their land.

Hours spent on clean-up work and disposal of waste can be costly. These costs can be reduced if clean-up is well organised, and illegal dumping is prevented in the first place.

Preventing illegal waste dumping creates a sustainable future where the health and wellbeing of communities and Country is protected for future generations.

**'A sustainable future means: that the sun, wind, sea, water, air are all here in the future so that we have an opportunity to draw on the life of the spirit of the land; so we all know our place in the framework of life; so we have the ability to move over the land, over Tjilbruke.'**

**Georgina Williams Yambo Kartanya  
Senior Woman, Kaurna Country, 2002**



Photo: Z. Thomas, DEC

*Various illegally dumped materials*



## Chapter Three:

# Steps to a successful prevention and clean-up project

There are seven steps to a successful prevention and clean-up project:

- Step 1: Assess your situation (see page 5)**
- Step 2: Seek help from others (see page 7)**
- Step 3: Apply for funding if required (see page 9)**
- Step 4: Stop dumping from happening again (see page 11)**
- Step 5: Clean up waste (see page 15)**
- Step 6: Tell others and celebrate (see page 18)**
- Step 7: Reflect and revisit (see page 21)**

These steps are described below and summarised in the checklist in Appendix 1.

DECC's *Planning activities to protect our places – a guide for Aboriginal communities* will help you plan and undertake your project to prevent and clean up illegal dumping. It was written to help Aboriginal communities plan, gain funding for, develop and carry out local community projects that protect and improve the environment. You can download a copy from [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/aboriginalcommunities.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/aboriginalcommunities.htm).

An example of a progress log sheet has been included in Appendix 4, which will help you track your progress and write your final project report.

## Step 1: Assess your situation

Before working out ways of preventing illegal dumping and organising clean-up activities, find out what sort of waste has been dumped and where it has been dumped. Gather information from your local community members – you may be surprised by how much they know.

### What type of waste has been dumped?

Consider the types and quantity of waste that have been dumped, as well as the time of day you suspect the dumping to have occurred. This information can help identify the sources of the waste or the type of people who are illegally dumping.

For example, neighbours or even Aboriginal community members living on the land could be dumping small quantities of household waste that should be taken to a council tip, construction companies could be dumping building waste to avoid fees, or people could be illegally disposing of hazardous wastes.

The type of waste dumped will influence what clean-up will be needed, which prevention methods you choose, and who you may need to speak with to get support.

If the dumped waste contains any identifying features, such as signs with business names or copies of receipts with names, addresses or phone numbers, contact your local council or DECC on 131 555 as soon as possible. They may be able to track down the dumpers and make them remove the dumped waste. See page 6 for further details.

## Consider your health and safety

Never open bags of waste or drums unless you have appropriate training to handle hazardous substances. Do not disturb waste which has a chemical smell or piles of soil that may be contaminated.

If dumped waste may pose a health risk, contact DECC on 131 555 or your local council for advice on clean-up and disposal. Your local fire authority may also be able to help. Illegally dumped waste that may pose a health risk, such as chemical drums or asbestos, should only be investigated by appropriately trained people.



Dumped asbestos sheeting



## Use maps and photographs

Make a map of the land – you could use a street directory or aerial photograph, or ask your local council if they can provide a map or aerial photo. On the map, pinpoint the types and quantities of waste that have been dumped and their potential health risks if you know about them. Also, note on the map points of access to the land. The map will then help you identify dumping hotspot locations and access points where barriers like fences or gates would help control illegal dumping.

**Hotspots** – areas where illegal dumping frequently occurs.

Take photos of illegal dumping hotspot areas and of the waste. These will be useful as 'before', 'during' and 'after' clean-up photos to:

- show funding bodies the progress of the work
- broadcast achievements made, which you can publicise in the local media
- possibly help authorities track down the people that dumped the waste.

## Report illegal dumping to authorities

Aboriginal communities can help local councils and DECC investigate illegal dumping by reporting information about illegally dumped waste, illegal dumpers or suspicious activities.

Complete the form in Appendix 2 and fax it to DECC on (02) 9995 5911, or email the information to [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au). Alternatively, phone your local council, or DECC's Environment Line on 131 555 (24-hour).

Report illegal dumping to authorities as soon as you become aware of it, and provide as much information as possible. If authorities can track down the dumpers they can issue them with penalties and make them clean up the dumped waste.

Photo: D. Cole, DECC



Council officer inspecting an illegal dumping incident

Even if you do not see people dumping waste, reporting the incident will help DECC and local councils investigate illegal dumpers in the area.

## Illegal dumping and the law

Illegal dumping is a crime and the penalties for dumping are significant. The *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* is the main legislation used by DECC and local councils to protect the environment and prosecute illegal dumpers.

Both DECC and local councils have officers that are authorised to:

- investigate illegal dumping
- require clean-up action to be taken
- issue fines
- prosecute illegal dumpers.

People who illegally dump can be fined \$1500 or face penalties of up to \$250,000 if found guilty in court. Companies that illegally dump can be fined \$5000 or prosecuted in court with penalties of up to \$5 million or seven years jail.

DECC and local councils can require offenders to clean up and dispose of dumped waste. If nobody witnessed the illegal dumping, and authorities cannot identify who may have dumped the waste, the owner or occupier of the land will bear the clean-up cost.



Photo: N. Thomas and S. Leppan, Courtesy Coordieitche United Aboriginal Corporation

## DECC prosecutes illegal landfilling

DECC prosecuted a demolition company for illegally transporting approximately 1660 tonnes of building waste such as concrete, metal, bricks, soil and timber to a private property. The demolition company was convicted and fined \$40,000, and ordered to place a notice in the local paper publicising the conviction. The company director was also convicted and fined \$20,000.

## Council prosecutes illegal dumping

Liverpool City Council prosecuted a waste transporter for illegally transporting 120 m<sup>3</sup> of building waste containing asbestos to a council park. The council also prosecuted the person who excavated the waste from a building site. Both the waste transporter and waste owner were convicted and each was fined \$13,200. The court also ordered them to pay clean-up costs of \$18,045.

## Step 2: Seek help from others

Support from Elders can increase the success of an illegal dumping prevention project. Elders can have a powerful influence by mobilising community support, reinforcing respect for Country and encouraging support from partners.

Consider which people and organisations have an interest in preventing illegal dumping. These may include your neighbours, community organisations, local businesses, state government organisations and your local council. Find out if any of these groups are interested in working with you to plan, implement and monitor prevention and clean-up activities. A full list of contacts is included in Chapter 5.

## Working with neighbours

Find out if your neighbours would like to be involved and what help they are prepared to provide. Involve them in the planning of your clean-up and illegal dumping prevention work as early as possible. For some people, face-to-face meetings will be necessary; for others, phone calls, written letters or

email may be all that is needed. Some neighbours may also suggest ways of preventing illegal dumping, and from their previous experience they may know which strategies will succeed.

## Find community partners

Prevention and clean-up projects work best if they are supported by active community participation. Community partners include youth groups, bushcare groups, chambers of commerce, business operators and community organisations such as Clean Up Australia, Keep Australia Beautiful, Landcare, Greening Australia and Conservation Volunteers Australia. These community partners can work with you to plan ways of preventing illegal dumping.

Educational institutions such as schools, TAFEs and universities may let their students participate in clean-up events and working bees, or even be interested in including clean-up projects as part of their curriculum. Some schools have Aboriginal Education Assistants who may be able to help students get involved in your project.

## Tips for building partnerships

- Find out what priorities you have in common and start working on these together.
- Remember: building trust and cooperation between partners might require work too.
- Recognise and respect the ways in which your partners work.
- Establish a working group with your partners and develop protocols for working together.

Aboriginal community organisations that can offer assistance include LALCs, Community Development Employment Projects and the Aboriginal Medical Service. The Caring for our Country Facilitators Network may also be able to put you in contact with potential partners. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relation's Job Network may also be able to find people to assist you – see [www.jobnetwork.gov.au](http://www.jobnetwork.gov.au).



## **Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation and partners clean up waste to protect cultural heritage**

The Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation initiated the Beach Middens Project in Port Kembla on the NSW south coast to protect and promote the area's rich Aboriginal cultural heritage. The Corporation obtained a Protecting Our Places grant from the NSW Environmental Trust to clean up and regenerate an area containing middens. Large amounts of illegally dumped waste had been dumped on the land, which was also overgrown with bitou bush, an invasive weed.

After the waste had been cleared and the bitou bush removed, bollards were installed to protect the middens from further dumping of waste and prevent vehicle damage, while allowing pedestrian access to the site. Native plants were also grown on the middens to protect them from the weather and vehicles. A small area was left uncovered, while being protected by plants, so people could see what the middens looked like without them becoming damaged.



*Seating near MM Beach at Port Kembla*

Photo: N. Thomas and S. Leppan, Courtesy Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation

This work was done by teams of workers and volunteers from the Corporation, local Community Development Employment Project, Greencorps and contractors.

A significant partnership on this project was between the Corporation and the team from the neighbouring heritage park which contained a European military memorial. Under the project, seating was placed on hills in the park which had a view of the ocean and Five Islands which were significant landmarks of the local dreaming stories. Totem poles were also installed and painted by Coomaditchie artists.

This park will be the beginning of the Ngarabaa-an walking track, to be developed by Aboriginal community groups from Port Kembla to Windang.

The collaboration has created a beautiful and important place that acknowledges Aboriginal and European cultures.

## **Contact government agencies**

Many government agencies may be interested in offering you help or support. Some government agencies like DECC and Forests NSW may be neighbouring landholders who can offer advice and contribute funds, labour or equipment to the project.

If constructing a fence will benefit both you and a neighbouring national park, DECC may supply or bear the cost of supplying the materials for a fence, if you provide the labour to construct it. For more information, see [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/policies/BoundaryFencing.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/policies/BoundaryFencing.htm).

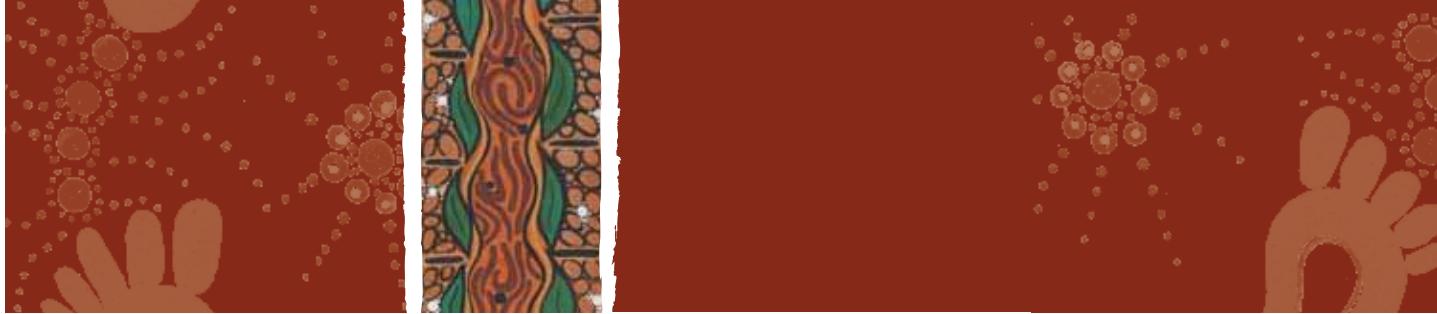
Your local Catchment Management Authority may support your project. Most catchment management authorities have Aboriginal staff who may be able to help you develop projects and strategies to resolve illegal dumping issues.

Local councils can offer assistance and support such as providing maps and aerial photos, helping you to obtain grant funding, contributing clean-up equipment, reusing and disposing of waste, helping promote projects and educating communities about illegal dumping.



Photo: D. Cole, DECC

*Representatives from Ngunnawal LALC, Queanbeyan City Council and DECC discuss the Mirabee Clean-up Project, Queanbeyan*



Council rangers may be able to patrol areas where dumping is likely to occur, which helps catch dumpers in the act. High profile 'crackdowns' using patrols made up of rangers or police officers also makes offenders think they are more likely than usual to get caught.

Some councils have Aboriginal Liaison Officers that can help you develop partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders. The NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council may also be able to provide assistance in bringing people together.

DECC can offer support and assistance by:

- helping you understand illegal dumping and environment protection laws that may affect your land
- enforcing the law against illegal waste dumpers
- providing guidance on planning prevention and clean-up projects
- helping you apply for grant funding
- publicising your successful prevention and clean-up project.

### **Step 3: Apply for funding if required**

Not every clean-up and illegal dumping prevention project will need funding, but if yours does grants are available for a range of environmental and crime prevention projects.

To apply for funding you will need to complete an application form and work out a budget. DECC's *Planning activities to protect our places – a guide for Aboriginal communities* can help you achieve these tasks. You can download a copy from [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/aboriginalcommunities.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/aboriginalcommunities.htm).

There are several funding programs administered by federal, state and local government, and by institutions, charitable trusts and other companies. Details of grants available for community projects are given in Table 2 below, and are up-to-date as at August 2008.

Funding programs are regularly updated at [www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au](http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au). Check this website or call NSW Department of Community Services on (02) 9716 2964 to find out what other funding sources are available. The NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs may also have information about potential funding sources.

**Table 2: Grants and financial assistance for illegal dumping prevention and clean-up activities**

<b>Grant</b>	<b>Type of grant</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Further information</b>
Environmental Trust – Protecting Our Places	Provides funds to protect land that is significant to Aboriginal people. Funds projects that prevent and clean up illegal dumping, as well as restoring and rehabilitating the land. Projects must have environmental outcomes.	Applications usually open in February and close in May each year.	Environmental Trust's Aboriginal Programs Manager Phone: (02) 8837 6399 Email: <a href="mailto:info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au">info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au</a> Web: <a href="http://www.environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au">www.environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au</a>



<b>Grant</b>	<b>Type of grant</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Further information</b>
Environmental Trust – Restoration and Rehabilitation Grants Program	Provides funding to restore and rehabilitate land. Funds projects that prevent and clean up land.	Applications usually open in February and close in May each year.	Environmental Trust Phone: (02) 8837 6093 Email: <a href="mailto:info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au">info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au</a> Web: <a href="http://www.environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au">www.environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au</a>
Environment Trust – Education Grants Program	Provides funding for educating the community about environmental issues and caring for the environment.	Expressions of interest usually open in February and close in April each year.	Environmental Trust Phone: (02) 8837 6093 Email: <a href="mailto:info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au">info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au</a> Web: <a href="http://www.environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au">www.environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au</a>
Environmental Trust – Emergency Pollution and Orphan Waste Clean-up Program	Provides funds in emergencies to clean up hazardous waste such as chemicals and asbestos.	Must contact DECC to obtain verbal approval before expending any funds. Grant application form must be completed before funds are committed.	DECC Environment Line Phone: 131 555 Email: <a href="mailto:info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au">info@environmentaltrust.nsw.gov.au</a> Web: <a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/cleanup.htm">www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/cleanup.htm</a>
Catchment management authority funding	Provides funding to help land managers improve and restore the state's natural resources.	There are 13 catchment management authority regions in NSW. Contact your local catchment management authority to find out grant application details.	Your local catchment management authority Contact details available online Web: <a href="http://www.cma.nsw.gov.au">www.cma.nsw.gov.au</a>
Local government funding	Some councils provide small grants.	Check with your local council.	NSW Department of Local Government Phone: (02) 4428 4100 Email: <a href="mailto:dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au">dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au</a> Web: <a href="http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au">www.dlg.nsw.gov.au</a>
Australian Government – Caring for our Country	Provides various small grants that develop community skills, knowledge and engagement while protecting the natural environment and improving sustainable management of natural resources.	Caring for our Country replaces Envirofund. Further information about various grants under this program is available online.	Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts Phone: 1800 552 008 Web: <a href="http://www.nrm.gov.au">www.nrm.gov.au</a>
Australian Government – Working on Country Projects	Provides grants for projects that keep Country healthy and protect Aboriginal heritage.	The funding must be used to employ Indigenous people to do the work. Applications usually open mid year and close in August.	Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts Phone: 1800 552 008 Email: <a href="mailto:workingoncountry@environment.gov.au">workingoncountry@environment.gov.au</a> Web: <a href="http://www.nrm.gov.au/funding/woc.html">www.nrm.gov.au/funding/woc.html</a>



## Step 4: Stop dumping from happening again

Deciding on the best ways to prevent illegal dumping will depend on the types of waste being dumped, where it is being dumped, who you think may be responsible for the dumping, and available time, funding and resources.

LALCs may consider identifying and prioritising proposed works or projects in their community land and business plans, or other plans of management for their lands.

### Stop dumpers accessing your land

In most cases, illegal dumping takes very little effort. It can be harder to dispose of waste legally than to dump it illegally. Preventing people from dumping will save you a lot of time and money, as clean-up is time consuming and expensive.

Where there is only one access point to your site such as a lane, fire trail or private road, a secure barrier that stops vehicles from entering may reduce dumping. Fences, posts, bollards and rocks have all been used to prevent vehicle access. Lockable gates can also be used, but first consider availability of access for fire authorities and other emergency services.

Consider the potential for vandalism when planning your project and factor in maintenance or the additional cost of vandal-resistant materials. At a number of sites, vandal-resistant locks, locking bollards and sturdy fence materials have successfully been used.

Using concrete blocks to prevent entry to a site can be fairly cheap and effective, although they may not fit in with the natural environment and can look unattractive, especially if they attract graffiti.

Logs and boulders used as barriers can fit in with the natural environment. Boulders, although they are more expensive, will not rot over time and will not need replacing as often as logs. Also remember that

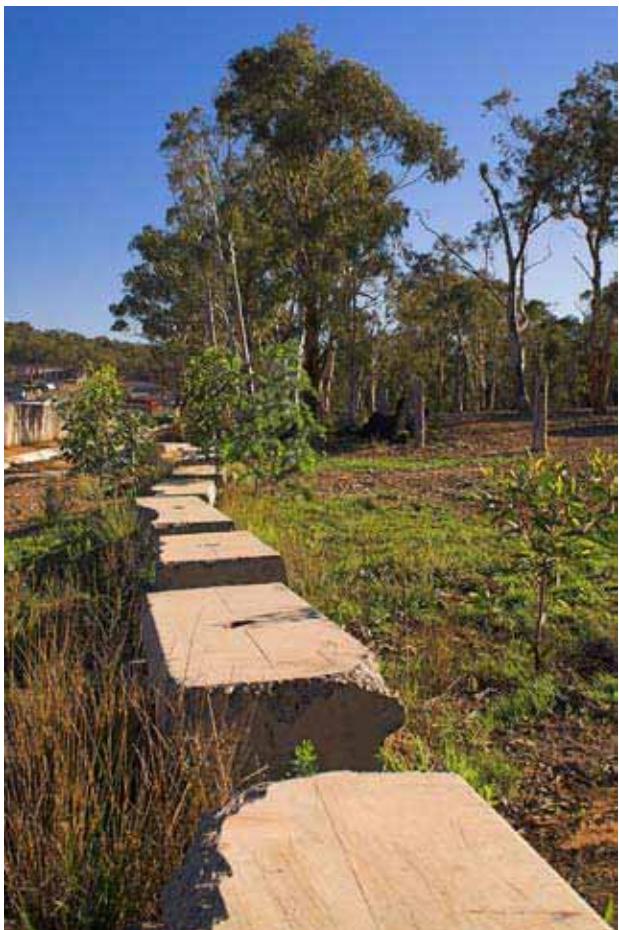


Photo: Z. Thomas, DECC

*Concrete blocks prevent illegal access to land owned by Ngunnawal LALC, Queanbeyan*

some vehicles like four-wheel drives and trucks can drive straight over logs.

Large boulders placed close together can prevent many motor vehicles from entering a site. Boulders should be sourced from quarries rather than the bush to avoid interfering with natural habitat. Boulders may be difficult to obtain and the machinery needed to transport and move big rocks into place can be expensive. However, some communities have had boulders, and the use of equipment to move them, donated to them by local businesses.



*Boulders and a locked gate prevent vehicles from entering land owned by Ngunnawal LALC, Queanbeyan*

*Photo: Z. Thomas, DECC*



*Earth mounds help stop vehicles entering land owned by Ngunnawal LALC, Queanbeyan*

*Photo: D. Cole, DECC*

Earth mounds may be more likely to be accepted by the community as they can fit in with the natural environment, do not attract graffiti and can prevent vehicles from entering a site. Mounds can be formed from earth taken from your site. Imported material and illegally dumped materials may also be suitable for mound construction but they must be fit for the purpose, and pose minimal risk of harm to the environment and human health. Earth moving equipment will be required, the use of which can be costly. Some communities have received in-kind support in the form of equipment and a driver from partners such as their local council.

Growing plants on the mounds can make them more attractive. Consider involving your community in a planting day. The community will feel a greater sense of pride in something they have been involved in and will be more likely to report any suspicious activity in the area.

### **Examples of barriers**

- **Wollondilly Shire Council, in partnership with a local Aboriginal community, used almost indestructible fence materials at a remote Aboriginal-owned site in Wedderburn to**

**prevent four-wheel drive and commercial vehicles from dumping materials. The neighbouring landholder donated railway tracks and steel rope, which were used to erect a 500-m fence. The fence has remained intact, and unauthorised vehicles have been kept out.**

- **Tweed Byron LALC restricted uncontrolled access to their site by using a combination of timber fencing, bollards and gates at Fingal Peninsula.**
- **As part of the Mirabee Clean-up Project, the Ngunnawal LALC and Queanbeyan City Council created earth mound barriers by using fill that had been illegally dumped on the land along with more from a nearby recycling facility. A neighbouring quarry also donated boulders and a truck to move them. This work created effective barriers at minimal cost.**

### **Let dumpers know they will get caught**

When a person decides whether to illegally dump waste, they often compare the risk of getting caught with the money they can save if they dispose of the waste illegally. If the person thinks that they are more likely to be caught, this may stop them from illegally dumping.

Areas subject to frequent dumping should be visited regularly, and dumped waste removed as quickly as possible. Waste dumpers often know the areas in which they dump and visit these sites beforehand.

People who do not know the area may dump if there is waste on the land already, as they may think the



area must be an easy place to dump waste without being caught. If waste has been removed and they see people in the area, any of these people may be deterred from dumping waste.

Signs are useful to deter dumpers. They can:

- tell people that dumping of waste is illegal and hefty fines apply
- provide information on who people should contact if they witness illegal dumping
- inform people that there are regular patrols or surveillance of the area
- promote the cultural values of the site.

Signs need to be put where they are easy to see and the words should be simple and effective. Use few words in a large size, and make the message clear and direct. Signs may need maintenance if they are vandalised.

Encourage your local council to put up signs on the edge of your land. Signs that state the area has been cleaned up in a joint project between Aboriginal communities and the government show that the land is important and illegal dumping will not be tolerated.



Sign warning trespassers to stay out of land owned by Gandangara LALC, Menai



A Sutherland Shire Council sign reminding people that dumping is crime and the area is under surveillance

Suggested messages for signs include:

- 'Waste dumping is illegal. Heavy penalties apply.'
- 'Witness illegal dumping? Report offenders to 131 555.'
- 'Warning. Severe penalties apply for illegal dumping. Area under surveillance and patrol.'
- 'Warning. Privately owned land: trespassers will be prosecuted.'

Signs could also include information about the cultural significance of the site such as details of stories or cultural icons, or include information about the native plants or animals living on the site. Examples of messages are:

- 'Protect this place, dreaming site of the rainbow serpent.'
- 'Protect this place, home of the endangered glossy black cockatoo.'



## Maintain a presence on Country

Returning land to its natural state, as it was before the dumping occurred, can show that it is cared for and help maintain a presence on Country. Consider establishing or working with an existing bushcare group to regenerate the area and provide ongoing maintenance.

Items such as benches, pathways, picnic tables and Aboriginal art help show that people visit regularly and can change the way the community feels about the place.

People will get involved in projects that build community pride. If people are known to regularly watch or visit the area, dumping will be deterred as dumpers know there is an increased risk that they will get caught. Encourage the community to report illegal dumping.

Those who dump illegally often make excuses for it. They may say they do not know how to dispose of waste properly, or that it is difficult, inconvenient or too expensive to dispose of waste legally. Encourage the local council to educate businesses and the community about proper ways to dispose of waste, including details of local landfills and recycling centres with their opening hours and contact details.

### Nanima Reserve deters illegal dumpers

The Nanima Reserve project was initiated after a scoping report prepared by DECC in 2003 identified a pollution problem at Nanima, which is a significant cultural area. DECC developed the project in consultation with the local community, Aboriginal organisations from Wellington, Wellington Shire Council and Wellington's catchment management authority.

Council staff removed rubbish from a dumping place within the reserve boundary. DECC purchased native plants including bush tucker plants to rehabilitate the area. The local community, including schoolchildren, attended the planting day and a barbecue.



*Totem poles at Coomaditchie Lagoon, Port Kembla*

### Totem poles as a symbol of Aboriginal presence

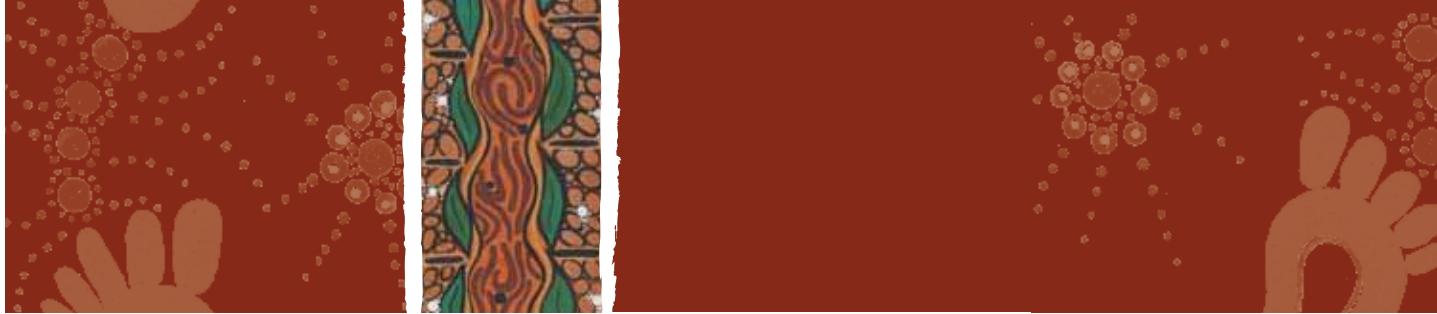
The Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation at Port Kembla installed totem poles in a park overlooking the sea. The poles, which were painted by artists from the Coomaditchie Artists Cooperative, are a highly visual element of Aboriginal symbolism and reminder of Aboriginal presence in the land. See page 8 for more information on this project.

### Stop community dumping on Country

Some LALCS have found that some community members are dumping waste on Country, particularly in rural areas. If you suspect this is the case, you might want to conduct a survey of your community to identify why this is happening and how to stop it.

### Survey helps improve waste management

Biripi Aboriginal Medical Service developed a survey in 2008 for members of the Purfleet LALC community in Taree. The people were asked about their attitudes to waste disposal and for reasons why waste may be dumped on community land. The results of the survey will inform the development of an improved waste management system that will give people fewer reasons to dump waste. A bin for syringes has already been installed to reduce dumping of hazardous waste. Installation of a cultural cleaning station has been proposed to prevent animal waste from hunting and fishing from being scattered on the land, and to promote cultural practices. Aboriginal artists will prepare signage and information to help keep the area free of illegally dumped waste.



There are many reasons why people illegally dump waste. It may be that waste services are inadequate, people do not know when waste is scheduled to be collected or how to dispose of their waste properly, or people have lost their connection with Country and have not thought about the impacts of illegal dumping.

Members of your community may dump waste because it is too difficult to access waste collection services, the collection is not frequent enough, or their bins are too small or they do not know what types of waste the bins are for. If they need to take their waste to the local tip, people may not have a vehicle to transport the waste or may be unwilling to pay disposal costs if this service is not provided free.

### **Working with government on providing adequate waste services**

Local councils generally provide waste collection and recycling services, but services vary from the provision of a local tip where waste can be taken to pickups from private land. Contact your local council to find out what services they can offer.

DECC has many resources that can help you ensure that waste and recycling infrastructure and services are adequate for the needs of your community. See [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/waste](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/waste) for further information.

The waste and recycling services provided to your community may be perfectly adequate but people may not be aware of them. Distribute information about ways of recycling or disposing of various types of waste. Information could include bin locations or tip opening times and costs. Consider working with local councils to distribute a waste calendar for waste collection dates that are specific to your community.

Perhaps members of your community illegally dump because they have not thought about the consequences of their behaviour on Country. Consider developing a program to reconnect people with Country and their Aboriginal cultural heritage. Promote the value of Country and build respect for the land by taking people on bushwalks, teaching them about plant identification, making digging sticks and educating them about ways in which illegal dumping harms community health and damages land, waters and Aboriginal culture.

### **Step 5: Clean up waste**

Before beginning clean-up activities, check that information which may help identify dumpers has been reported to authorities (see page 6).

Cleaning up waste will remove hazards and health risks and help return the land to its natural state. Removal of dumped waste can also discourage other people from dumping, although other actions such as those listed in Step 4 are also often required.

### **Clean up hazardous waste**

While all parts of a clean-up program are important, the priority is to first clean up waste which may harm people or the environment. On your map (see Step 1), rank sites according to the risk the dumped waste may pose to health or the environment. This will help you dedicate resources to areas where they are most needed.

Always consider health and safety during clean-up operations. Never open bags of waste or drums unless you have appropriate training to handle hazardous substances. Do not disturb waste which smells of chemicals or piles of soil that may be contaminated. Illegally dumped waste that may pose a health risk, such as chemical drums or asbestos, should only be cleaned up by people who are trained to deal with such waste, for example, your local fire authority.



Ensure all people handling waste have appropriate safety gear such as gloves, sturdy footwear and protective clothing.

The NSW Environmental Trust funds an Emergency Pollution and Orphan Waste Clean-up Program, which provides grants to clean up hazardous waste in emergencies where no other funds are available. The funds can also be used, in certain circumstances, to manage incidents involving waste materials such as drums of hazardous waste or asbestos. See Table 2 in Step 3 for contact information.

### Organise a clean-up day

Organising clean-up days involving community members is a good way of gaining support for your project. LALCs, Community Development Employment Projects, the Aboriginal Medical Service the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relation's Job Network and local schools may be able to help you organise a community clean-up day, and volunteer to help on the day itself.

Consider participating in Clean Up Australia Day, which is normally held in early March. Clean Up Australia is an apolitical, non-profit community organisation. By registering a site with Clean Up Australia, you can clean up your site with help from the broader community on one day and save money on tipping fees.

Encourage people to come along to the clean-up day by writing a press release that can be published in your local newspaper or ask your local radio station to make a community announcement. Letter box drops and posters can also encourage people to come along and help. Your local council may allow you to put a poster in your local library or on a community notice board.

*Photo: B. Graham, courtesy Sutherland Shire Council*



*Clean-up day on land owned by Gandangara LALC, Menai*

**The Appin Bush Users Group organised a clean-up day in November 2006 on Aboriginal-owned land, which involved 300 people from the local community. During the day, 30 tonnes of mixed waste was removed and 250 tonnes was taken to central locations for future removal.**

### Separate waste that can be recycled and reused

Many waste materials that are illegally dumped are a valuable resource that can be recycled and in some cases reused, such as scrap metal, bricks, concrete, fridges, computers, car bodies and old tyres. Fill can be reused on-site to create earth mounds to prevent illegal access (see page 12 for further details).

Scrap metal, such as tin roofing and old car bodies, can be taken to metal recycling yards where it is made into new products. Some metal recycling companies will pay you money for scrap metal or will remove it from your land at no cost.

Before removing a dumped car from private land, contact the police to see if there is an owner or if it has been stolen.

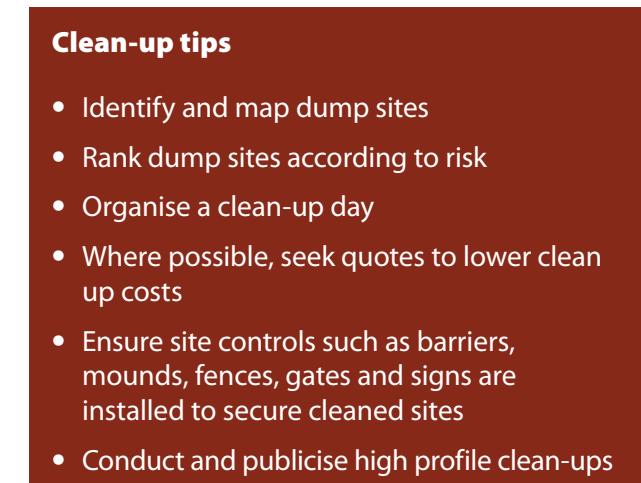
To find out more about how you can recycle or reuse illegally dumped waste materials, contact the Recycling Near You Hotline on 1300 733 712 or visit [www.recyclingnearyou.com.au](http://www.recyclingnearyou.com.au).



The Karuah and Worimi LALCs, in partnership with Port Stephens Council, removed approximately 35 tonnes of building and garden waste from Aboriginal-owned land. A contractor provided bins and disposed of the waste to a licensed landfill. Fifteen tonnes of scrap metal were also salvaged and sold to a metal merchant.



*Dumped cars such as these can be taken to a scrap metal yard for recycling*



### **Clean-up tips**

- Identify and map dump sites
- Rank dump sites according to risk
- Organise a clean-up day
- Where possible, seek quotes to lower clean up costs
- Ensure site controls such as barriers, mounds, fences, gates and signs are installed to secure cleaned sites
- Conduct and publicise high profile clean-ups

*Photo: B. Graham, courtesy Sutherland Shire Council*



*Using machinery to remove illegally dumped waste on land owned by Gandangara LALC, Menai*

### **Disposing of waste**

One way to clean up dumped waste is to have a skip bin delivered to your site. Make sure it is delivered on or close to the day of the clean-up as an empty skip bin is an open invitation to others to fill it with their own waste for which you will have to pay. To hire a skip bin, check the Yellow Pages or local newspapers. Make sure that the skip bin company will take your waste to a waste facility that can lawfully receive it.

If your community has access to machinery or vehicles to move or transport waste, consider transporting waste yourself to recycling or disposal facilities. You could try to schedule clean-up activities for a time when you need equipment for other works such as road construction or maintenance. Check whether your community, local council or neighbouring landholders can help you access machinery to lift and transport the waste.

If you plan to clean up large quantities of waste, get quotes from earthmoving or waste collection companies to do the work on your behalf. Seek quotes from more than one company to ensure they are competitive and ask for quotes in writing.

After they complete the job, ensure they give you copies of disposal docket so you can check the waste was taken to a waste facility that can lawfully receive it. Make sure they take their own waste away with them too. The best way to do this is to make it a written condition in the quote.



### **Partners clean up illegally dumped waste**

The Dareton Aboriginal community, in partnership with the Far West Area Health Service, Murdi Paaki Regional Housing and the Wentworth Shire Council, were involved in a clean-up project on Aboriginal-owned land. The project was funded by the Environmental Trust.

Waste was pushed into piles using heavy machinery and was then loaded onto a truck for transfer to the local landfill facility. The remaining litter was collected by hand and placed in industrial bins. Council contractors and local Community Development Employment Project participants completed the work.

Approximately 1600 m<sup>3</sup> of waste were removed from the site as part of the project.

Informing the community about your illegal dumping prevention program sends a clear message to illegal dumpers that their behaviour is unacceptable and costs the community time, resources and money. It can also empower community members to report people they see illegally dumping or help with future clean-ups.

Publicising clean-up efforts and prevention programs can help reinforce partnerships between Aboriginal communities, local and state government agencies and the community.

Publicity can help your illegal dumping prevention project by:

- generating support and understanding
- sustaining project momentum
- helping to justify continued funding
- increasing community awareness.

The list of Aboriginal media services provided in Table 3 may be useful for promoting your illegal dumping prevention projects. Your local council may also have details of the media in your area.

### **Have a ceremony or celebration**

Acknowledge your success by holding a ceremony or celebration at the end of your project. Such occasions also offer good opportunities to thank project partners and obtain media coverage. You could also issue certificates of appreciation to partners and participants on the day.

## **Step 6: Tell others and celebrate**

Do not sell yourself short – share information about your successes. You might inspire others to follow your lead.

### **Promote your success**

Local publicity, such as a press release sent to a newspaper, can inform the local community of the problems of illegal waste dumping and inform them of what action you have taken to prevent and clean up dumped waste. Some of the best ways of getting publicity are to invite your local politician to a ceremony or celebration (see next section), and to write a press release and send it to your local paper, accompanied by a photograph if possible. See Appendix 3 for a sample press release.



Photo: R. Been, courtesy  
Inverell Reconciliation Group



### New educational walking track created

The Inverell Reconciliation Group used an Environmental Trust grant to rehabilitate the old settlement area of the Goonoowigall Bushland Reserve. The area had been degraded by neglect and rubbish dumping, and 56 truckloads of rubbish were removed from the site, a significant step towards environmental improvement.

The group created an educational walking track with signs relating bush tucker stories and cultural information. They also recorded the bush tucker and medicinal plants occurring on the site, and created a memorial for the Aboriginal people who had lived in or travelled through the area in the past.

*Nhunta Karra Kara walking track opening ceremony,  
Inverell*

The project concluded with a successful opening ceremony which was attended by over 120 supporters, including Elders and extended family members of the original inhabitants. The ceremony received media coverage on primetime local television, on the radio and in the local newspaper.

### Nominate your project for an award

A good way to promote your illegal dumping prevention program is to nominate it for an award. For example, the Banksia Indigenous Award, 'Caring for Country' promotes environmental initiatives by Aboriginal communities. For more information, visit the Banksia Environmental Foundation website at [www.banksiafdn.com](http://www.banksiafdn.com) or phone (03) 9684 4667.

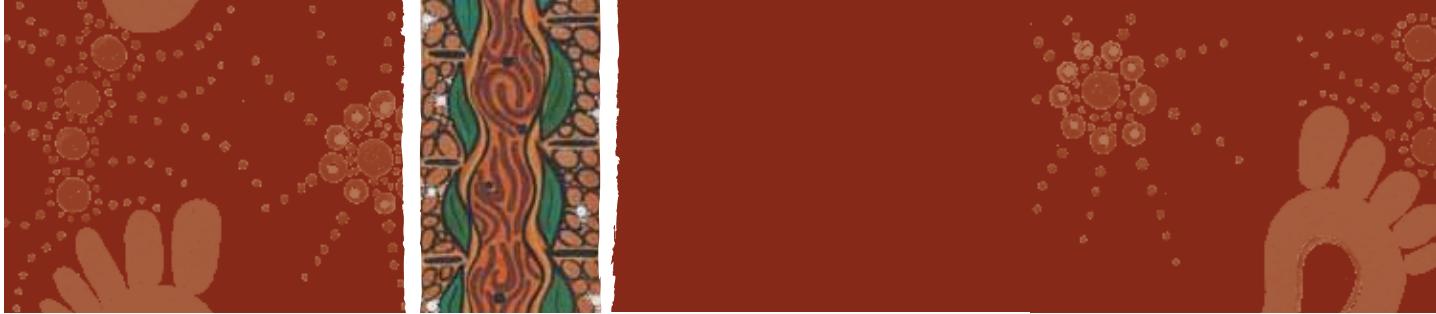
Community Builders (see Chapter 5 for contact information) also lists community awards you might consider nominating your illegal dumping project for.

**Table 3: Aboriginal media services**

Name	Type of media	Services	For information
Koori Mail	Koori Mail is a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fortnightly newspaper. It provides news, views, advertisements and other material of interest to Indigenous Australians and Australians interested in Indigenous affairs.	Free advertisements on 'Calendar' page	Koori Mail Phone: (02) 6622 2666 Email: <a href="mailto:admin@koorimail.com">admin@koorimail.com</a> Web: <a href="http://www.koorimail.com">www.koorimail.com</a>



<b>Name</b>	<b>Type of media</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>For information</b>
<i>National Indigenous Times</i>	<i>National Indigenous Times</i> is a daily Indigenous affairs news provider.	<i>National Indigenous Times</i> provides details of community activities and provides Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians with details of Indigenous affairs and mainstream activities in Australia.	National Indigenous Times Phone: 1300 786 611 Email: editor@nit.com.au Web: <a href="http://www.nit.com.au">www.nit.com.au</a>
<i>Our Place</i>	<i>Our Place</i> is a magazine published three times a year about people working with technology in remote communities.	<i>Our Place</i> encourages ideas for articles and feedback from readers.	Centre for Appropriate Technology Phone: (08) 8951 4311 Email: <a href="mailto:info@icat.org.au">info@icat.org.au</a> Web: <a href="http://www.icat.org.au">www.icat.org.au</a>
<i>National Indigenous Radio Service</i>	<i>National Indigenous Radio Service</i> is a national satellite company that provides 24-hour a day programming to over 160 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander radio stations throughout Australia.	Indigenous radio stations linked with the National Indigenous Radio Service include: Sydney (02) 9564 5090 Taree (02) 6551 3131 Coonabarabran (02) 6842 5262 Bourke (02) 6872 1065 Lismore (02) 6620 3929	National Indigenous Radio Service Phone: (07) 3252 4511 Email: <a href="mailto:info@nirs.org.au">info@nirs.org.au</a> Web: <a href="http://www.nirs.org.au">www.nirs.org.au</a>
<i>National Indigenous Television</i>	<i>National Indigenous Television</i> (NITV) is a 24-hour television service established by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and screened on pay TV.	NITV supports locally produced content and includes arts, music and dance, cultural, history, comedy and children's programs, dramas and films.	National Indigenous Television Phone: (02) 9959 3888 Email: <a href="mailto:admin@nitv.org.au">admin@nitv.org.au</a> Web: <a href="http://www.nitv.org.au">www.nitv.org.au</a>
<i>Living Black</i>	<i>Living Black</i> is an Indigenous current affairs program, tackling issues affecting the Indigenous community. The program also informs a wider audience about contemporary Indigenous issues.	Each episode covers the top Indigenous news story of the week, a studio interview, a feature story, profile of an Indigenous Australian and a news wrap/week in review.	SBS – <i>Living Black</i> Phone: 1800 500 727 Email: <a href="mailto:comments@sbs.com.au">comments@sbs.com.au</a> Web: <a href="http://news.sbs.com.au/livingblack">http://news.sbs.com.au/livingblack</a>
<i>Message Stick</i>	<i>Message Stick</i> is a resource for accessing information about the ABC's Indigenous productions across radio, television and the internet. It offers direct links to all the ABC's Indigenous programming.	<i>Message Stick</i> includes regularly updated discussion forums and a page dedicated to current and upcoming Indigenous events around Australia.	<i>Message Stick</i> Phone: (02) 8333 4036 Web: <a href="http://www.abc.net.au/message/contact/">www.abc.net.au/message/contact/</a>
<i>Vibe Australia</i>	<i>Vibe Australia</i> is a media, communications and events management agency.	<i>Vibe Australia</i> specialises in implementation, production and dissemination of targeted, culturally sensitive communication products and services.	<i>Vibe Australia</i> Phone: (02) 9361 0140 Email: <a href="mailto:info@vibe.com.au">info@vibe.com.au</a> Web: <a href="http://www.vibe.com.au">www.vibe.com.au</a>



## Step 7: Reflect and revisit

Reflect on what you and your community have learnt from your prevention and clean-up activities. Have they helped reconnect you to Country? If you were to do the project again, how would you do it differently? What do you think you did well? Who should you involve in future projects? What other prevention and clean-up methods could help to keep your land free of illegally dumped materials?

Unfortunately, despite your team's best efforts, the dumpers may return. Signs and barriers may get vandalised and more waste may be illegally dumped. It is important to maintain your site and keep it free of illegally dumped items as this sends a message to potential dumpers that dumping will not be tolerated. If signs and barriers become vandalised, try and repair them as soon as possible.

If you received grant funding to undertake your prevention and clean-up project you will need to prepare a report to document what you did and how funds were spent. Keeping good notes and records throughout the project will make it easier to prepare the final report. You can also record your activities on a progress log sheet, an example of which is included in Appendix 4.

Photos of before, during and after clean up and prevention measures were implemented can be included in the report to demonstrate your activities and achievements.

### What next?

Think about applying for another grant to complement and enhance the good work you have already done. You might want to implement an ongoing revegetation project. Your local council, or contacts in Chapter 5 such as Conservation Volunteers Australia, Greening Australia or Landcare, could help.

Keep in touch with your project partners and seek their involvement in ongoing monitoring and maintenance.

Photo: B. Graham, courtesy Sutherland Shire Council



Photo: S. Middleton, DECC



Before (top) and after (bottom) clean-up project on land owned by Gandangara LALC, Menai.

## Chapter Four: *Case studies*

### **Case Study 1: Gandangara Cultural Centre Precinct Clean-up – joint pilot project between Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council and Sutherland Shire Council**

#### **About Gandangara LALC**

The original inhabitants of the Gandangara (Liverpool) came from three main tribes – the Dharug people (from the plains), the Dharawal people (from the coastal area) and the local Gandangara people. Non-Indigenous colonists displaced the traditional owners from their land within several decades and there is very little recorded history.

Gandangara LALC is based in Liverpool in Sydney's south-west and is one of 122 LALCs in NSW incorporated under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*. Set up in 1984, Gandangara LALC includes much of south and south-west Sydney, including large sections of Liverpool, Sutherland and Bankstown local government areas. The Gandangara LALC represents a community of about 7500 people.

#### **What was the problem?**

Gandangara LALC claimed Crown land which had a history of being used as a place to illegally dump materials due to its remoteness and proximity to a road.

#### **Who was involved in the project?**

Gandangara LALC, Sutherland Shire Council, DECC, Community Development Employment Project, Sutherland Police

#### **What did they want to do?**

- Clean up illegally dumped waste at the Gandangara Cultural Centre Precinct.
- Prevent further dumping by installing barriers.
- Improve environmental, heritage and cultural values of the site.

*Photo: B. Graham, courtesy Sutherland Shire Council*



*Construction waste was illegally dumped on land owned by Gandangara LALC, Menai*

- Provide training and improve employment opportunities for Community Development Employment Project participants.

#### **How was the project funded?**

Grant funds of \$50,000 were provided through the Clean-up on Aboriginal Owned Lands Program, a pilot project run by DECC.

#### **What did they do?**

- Nine Community Development Employment Project participants received Workcover site-specific industrial training.
- Removed 20 tonnes of illegally dumped household waste, building waste and asbestos.
- Recovered and recycled 3 tonnes of car bodies, steel and tyres.
- Reused 2500 tonnes of dumped soil, bricks and tiles to create deterrent mounds at strategic locations.
- Held a community clean-up event as part of Clean Up Australia Day.



- Erected gates, fences and earth mounds to restrict vehicular access to the site and reduce future dumping.
- Installed more than 20 signs indicating that the land was private property along Heathcote Road.
- Installed a heavy duty gate at the front entrance.
- Rehabilitated eroded 4WD tracks using materials on-site.
- Sutherland Shire Council and Sutherland Police conducted a campaign targeting both illegal dumping and illegal 4WD and trail bike activities.

### How did they promote the project?

An article appeared in the local newspaper at the beginning of the project.



*Photo: B. Graham, courtesy Sutherland Shire Council*

*Earth mounds being created to prevent illegal access to land owned by Gandangara LALC, Menai*

### What were the outcomes?

- 2500 tonnes of illegally dumped soil, bricks and tiles were used to create earth mounds.
- 23 tonnes of illegally dumped waste were removed from the site.
- The partnership between the LALC and Sutherland Shire Council was strengthened.
- A better understanding was gained of the size of the problem and what actions were needed to solve it.
- A better understanding was gained of the need to change community behaviour to prevent illegal dumping recurring.
- A greater sense of pride in the Country was obtained.

### What now?

- Discussions for future activities have started between various land managers in the area including DECC which manages the adjoining Georges River National Park.
- Degradation of this area has been identified as a major environmental issue affecting the health of the Georges River and Mill Creek catchment and may be addressed as part of DECC's Urban Sustainability Major Project Program.

### Further information

Local Government Section, Sustainability Programs Division

Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW

Phone: (02) 8837 6000

View this case study on the DVD affixed to the inside back cover of this handbook. Extra copies are available from DECC's Environment Line – phone 131555.



## **Case Study 2: Mirrabee Clean-Up Project** – joint pilot project between Ngunnawal Local Aboriginal Land Council and Queanbeyan City Council

### **About Ngunnawal LALC**

Ngunnawal LALC is based in the far south coast region and is one of 122 LALCs in NSW incorporated under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*. It represents a community of about 1100 people.

### **What was the problem?**

The Mirrabee land, a 94-hectare area of land on the south urban edge of Queanbeyan, owned by the Ngunnawal LALC, had a history of being used as an illegal dumping ground.

### **Who was involved in the project?**

Ngunnawal LALC, Queanbeyan City Council, Landcare, Jerrabomberra Residents Association, Readymix Quarry, NSW Police, DECC.

### **What did they want to do?**

- Remove illegally dumped waste from Mirrabee land, and recover resources where possible.
- Prevent further dumping by installing barriers.
- Strengthen the relationship between Ngunnawal LALC and partners.

### **How was the project funded?**

Grant funds of \$50,000 were provided through the Clean-up on Aboriginal Owned Lands Program, a pilot project run by DECC. Generous in-kind support was also offered by the partners.

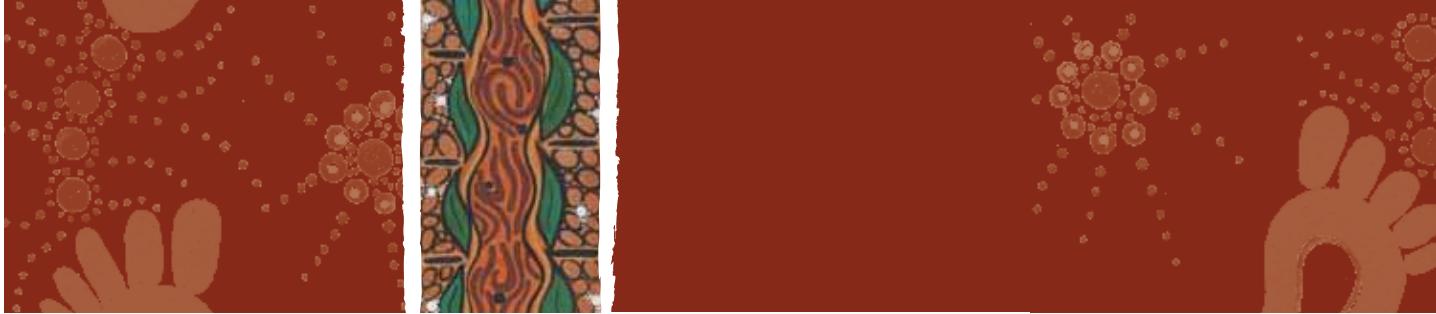
*Photo: Z. Thomas, DECC*



*Large amounts of waste made up of various materials were dumped on land owned by Ngunnawal LALC*

### **What did they do?**

- Used 10 m<sup>3</sup> of illegally dumped soil, bricks and concrete and 80 m<sup>3</sup> of fill from the council to make a 300-m-long barrier of earth mounds.
- Recycled 20 m<sup>3</sup> of dumped cars, white goods and other scrap metal through a metal merchant.
- Took 50 m<sup>3</sup> of illegally dumped household waste to a landfill.
- Readymix Quarry donated boulders and a truck to move the boulders to create a 300-m barrier.
- Erected a rural-style fence behind the boulders and earth mounds which allowed native animals to pass through but excluded vehicle access.
- Installed three purpose built gates at road entry points to the land.
- Installed six private property signs. It was decided not to identify the land as being Aboriginal-owned land for fear of negative attention and vandalism.



## How did they promote the project?

An article appeared in the *Queanbeyan Age*. A closing ceremony was also held.

## What were the outcomes?

- Land was cleared of 70 m<sup>3</sup> of illegally dumped waste.
- A further 10 m<sup>3</sup> of illegally dumped waste was used to create earth mounds.
- The land is now protected from further dumping through the installation of earth mounds, boulders, fences and gates.
- A good relationship was developed between the Ngunnawal LALC and the other project partners.

## What now?

Queanbeyan City Council and the Ngunnawal LALC plan to conduct further prevention and clean up projects on other sites owned by Ngunnawal LALC.

## Further information

Local Government Section,  
Sustainability Programs Division  
Department of Environment and  
Climate Change NSW  
Phone: (02) 8837 6000

View this case study on the DVD affixed to the inside back cover of this handbook. Extra copies are available from DECC's Environment Line – phone 131555.

There are also more details on this project in the sample press release in Appendix 3.

Photo: Z. Thomas, DECC



*One of the vandal-resistant gates installed on land owned by Ngunnawal LALC*

Photo: T. Baker, Landcare



*Cleaning up the land with the help of the community and a large skip*

## Chapter Five:

# Further reading and contact details

DECC 2008, *Crackdown on illegal dumping – Handbook for local government*, Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW.  
Visit: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/warr/IllegalDumpingHandbook.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/warr/IllegalDumpingHandbook.htm)

Department of Environment and Conservation 2004a, *Planning activities to protect our places – A guide for Aboriginal communities*, Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW.  
Visit: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/aboriginalcommunities.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/aboriginalcommunities.htm)

Department of Environment and Conservation 2004b, *Aboriginal people protecting country – Environmental sustainability success stories*, Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW.  
Visit: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/aboriginalcommunities.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/aboriginalcommunities.htm)

Department of Environment and Conservation 2004c, *Working with local Aboriginal communities on environmental projects*, Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW.  
Visit: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/aboriginalcommunities.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/aboriginalcommunities.htm)

US EPA 2002, 'Respect our resources: Prevent illegal dumping', *Tribal Waste Journal*, Issue 1, pp 5–19.  
Visit: [www.epa.gov/tribalmsw/pdftxt/twj-1.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/tribalmsw/pdftxt/twj-1.pdf)

Williams Yambo Kartanya, G, Ngangkiburka Kaurnayerta 2002, *Sustainable cultures and creating new cultures for sustainability*. Visit: [www.regional.org.au/au/soc/2002/5/williams.htm](http://www.regional.org.au/au/soc/2002/5/williams.htm)

## Useful contacts - government

### Caring for our Country Facilities Network

Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts  
Phone: 1800 552 008  
Visit: [www.nrm.gov.au/do/facilitator.html](http://www.nrm.gov.au/do/facilitator.html)

### Community Builders

NSW Department of Community Services  
Phone: (02) 9716 2964  
Email: [webkeeper@communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au](mailto:webkeeper@communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au)  
Visit: [www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au](http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au)

### Community Development Employment Projects

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs  
Phone: 1800 079 098  
Visit: [www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Programmes/IndigenousProgs](http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Programmes/IndigenousProgs)

### Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

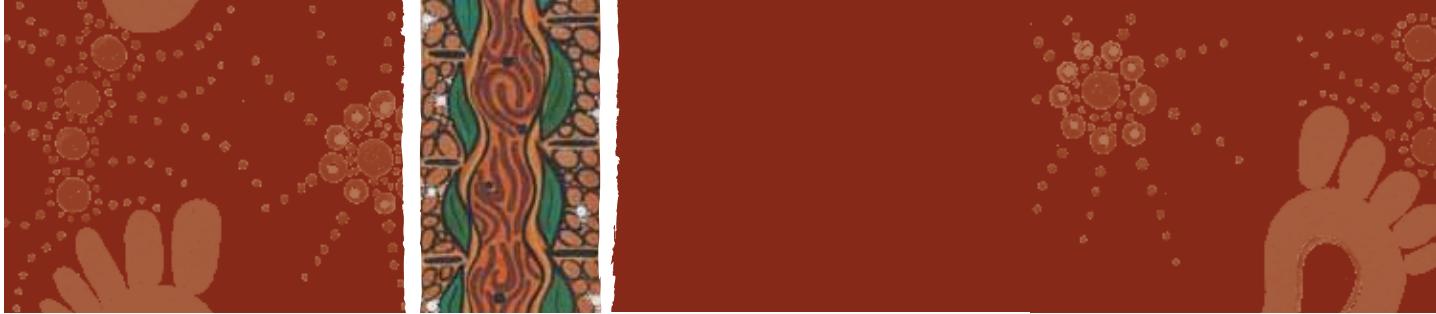
Phone: 1300 653 227  
Email: [enquiries@facsia.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@facsia.gov.au)  
Visit: [www.facsia.gov.au](http://www.facsia.gov.au)

### Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW (DECC)

Environment Line  
Phone: 131 555  
Email: [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au)  
Visit: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)

### Forests NSW

NSW Department of Primary Industries  
Phone: (02) 9872 0111  
Email: [cumberland@sf.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cumberland@sf.nsw.gov.au)  
Visit: [www.fores.t.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fores.t.nsw.gov.au)



## **Job Network**

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations  
Phone: 13 17 15  
Visit: [www.jobnetwork.gov.au](http://www.jobnetwork.gov.au)

## **NSW Aboriginal Land Council**

Phone: (02) 9689 4444 (head office)  
Email: [penwurru@alc.org.au](mailto:penwurru@alc.org.au)  
Visit: [www.alc.org.au](http://www.alc.org.au)

## **NSW Catchment Management Authorities**

Phone: 131 555  
Visit: [www.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cma.nsw.gov.au)

## **NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs**

Phone: (02) 9219 0700  
Email: [enquiries@daa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@daa.nsw.gov.au)  
Visit: [www.daa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.daa.nsw.gov.au)

## **NSW Department of Local Government**

Phone: (02) 4428 4100  
Email: [dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au)  
Visit: [www.dlg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au)

## **Useful contacts – community**

### **Aboriginal Medical Service**

Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales  
Phone: (02) 9212 4777  
Email: [ahmrc@ahmrc.org.au](mailto:ahmrc@ahmrc.org.au)  
Visit: [www.ahmrc.org.au](http://www.ahmrc.org.au)

### **Clean Up Australia**

Phone: 1800 282 329  
Visit: [www.cleanup.org.au](http://www.cleanup.org.au)

### **Conservation Volunteers Australia**

Phone: 1800 032 501  
Email: [info@conservationvolunteers.com.au](mailto:info@conservationvolunteers.com.au)  
Visit: [www.conservationvolunteers.com.au](http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au)

### **Greening Australia**

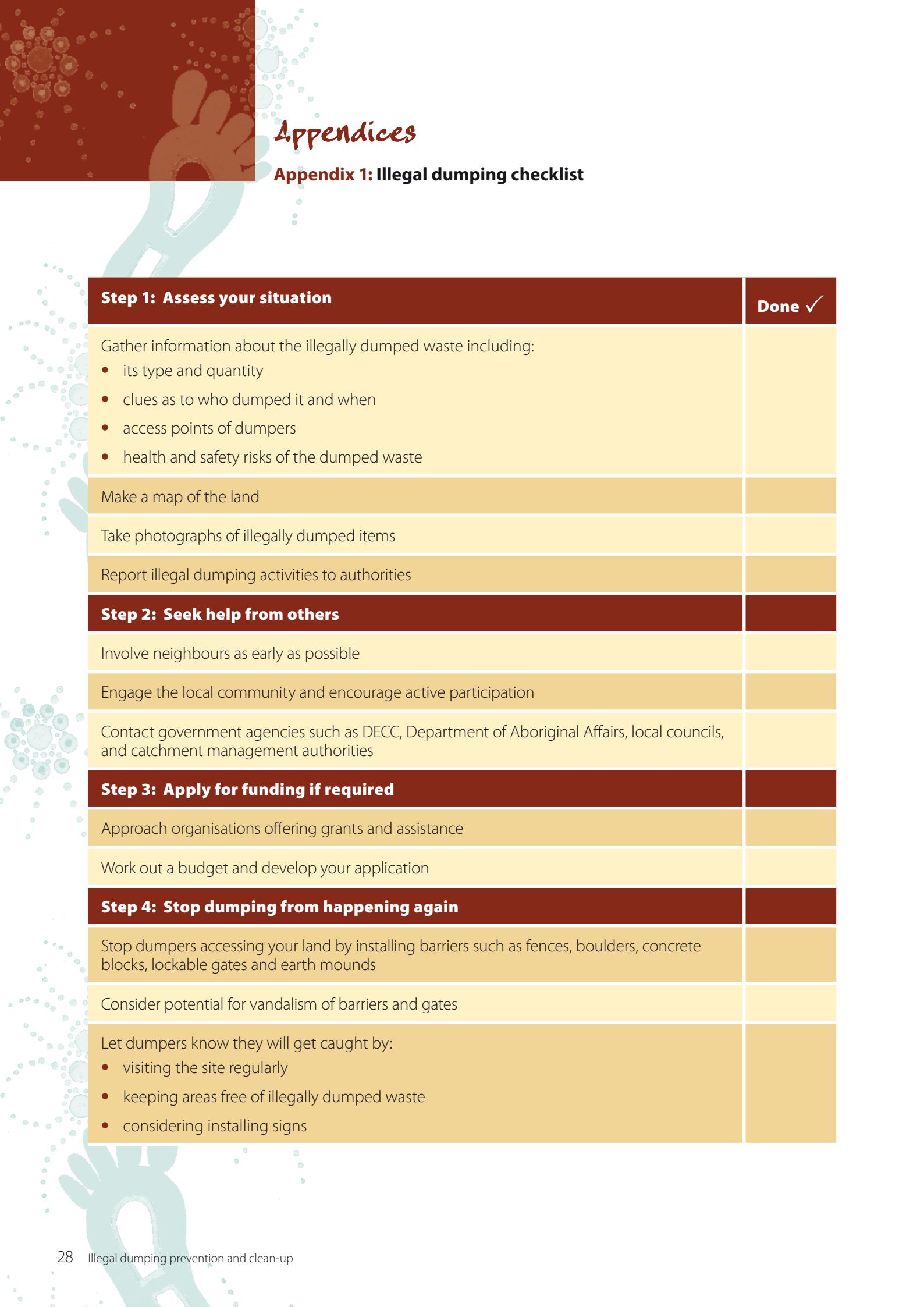
Phone: (02) 6202 1600  
Email: [general@greeningaustralia.org.au](mailto:general@greeningaustralia.org.au)  
Visit: [www.greeningaustralia.org.au](http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au)

### **Keep Australia Beautiful**

Phone: (02) 9633 3380  
Email: [info@kabnsw.org.au](mailto:info@kabnsw.org.au)  
Visit: [www.kabnsw.org.au](http://www.kabnsw.org.au)

### **Landcare**

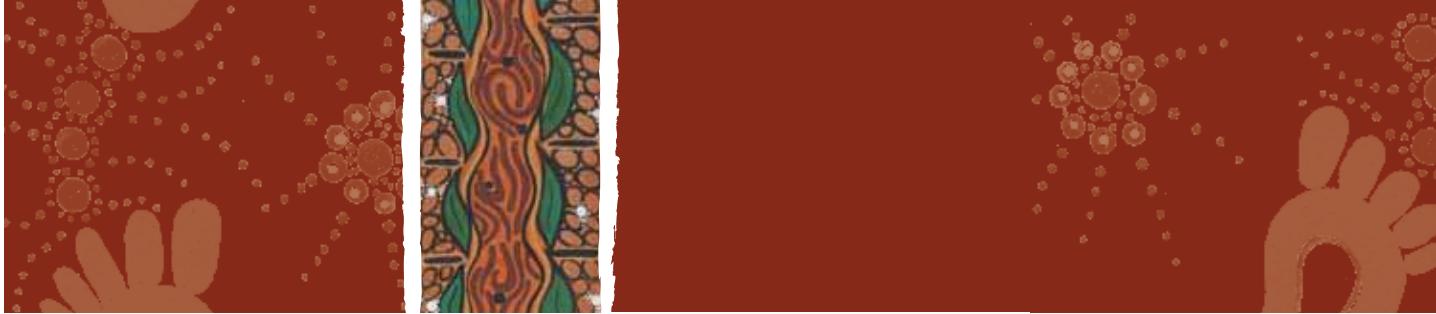
Phone: (02) 9412 1040  
Email: [enquiries@landcareaustralia.com.au](mailto:enquiries@landcareaustralia.com.au)  
Visit: [www.landcareaustralia.com.au](http://www.landcareaustralia.com.au)



## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Illegal dumping checklist

Step 1: Assess your situation	Done ✓
Gather information about the illegally dumped waste including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• its type and quantity</li><li>• clues as to who dumped it and when</li><li>• access points of dumpers</li><li>• health and safety risks of the dumped waste</li></ul>	
Make a map of the land	
Take photographs of illegally dumped items	
Report illegal dumping activities to authorities	
Step 2: Seek help from others	
Involve neighbours as early as possible	
Engage the local community and encourage active participation	
Contact government agencies such as DECC, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, local councils, and catchment management authorities	
Step 3: Apply for funding if required	
Approach organisations offering grants and assistance	
Work out a budget and develop your application	
Step 4: Stop dumping from happening again	
Stop dumpers accessing your land by installing barriers such as fences, boulders, concrete blocks, lockable gates and earth mounds	
Consider potential for vandalism of barriers and gates	
Let dumpers know they will get caught by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• visiting the site regularly</li><li>• keeping areas free of illegally dumped waste</li><li>• considering installing signs</li></ul>	



		<b>Done ✓</b>
Maintain a presence on Country by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• installing benches, pathways and picnic tables</li><li>• building community pride by involving the community in projects</li><li>• encouraging the community to report illegal dumping</li></ul>	
Stop community dumping on Country by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ensuring waste services are adequate</li><li>• educating your community</li><li>• reconnecting people with Country</li></ul>	
<b>Step 5: Clean up waste</b>		
Clean up hazardous waste first		
Organise a clean-up day		
Separate waste that can be recycled and reused		
Dispose of waste to a waste facility that can lawfully receive it		
<b>Step 6: Tell others and celebrate</b>		
Take photographs showing the results of your work		
Prepare a press release and contact local and Aboriginal media		
Have a ceremony or celebration		
Nominate your project for an award		
<b>Step 7: Reflect and revisit</b>		
Consider what you would do differently next time		
Complete project reporting		
Maintain barriers and signs		
Keep areas free of illegally dumped items		



## Appendix 2: Illegal dumping reporting form

**To: Department of Environment and Climate Change**  
**Fax: (02) 9995 5911 (or report information to Environment Line**  
**by telephone on 131 555)**

If you saw a vehicle, what was the registration number? .....

What kind of vehicle was it (e.g. truck, car, ute) and were there any other distinguishing features (e.g. signs)?  
.....

What was the make, model and colour? .....

If you saw people dumping the waste, how many people were there? .....

What did they look like (e.g. gender, hair colour, distinguishing features)?  
.....  
.....

What date did you discover the dumped waste? .....

What type of waste has been dumped (e.g. household waste, building waste, fibro asbestos, chemical drums) and how much of each type (e.g. number of bags, a van load, multiple loads)?  
.....  
.....

Where has the waste been dumped? .....

Nearest road/town/suburb .....

Other details about the dumping location (e.g. landmarks, near creek, landowner)  
.....

How was the land accessed to dump materials?  
.....

---

Your name: ..... Phone: .....

Community/organisation:  
.....

Can your details be provided to another regulatory authority such as your local council?

( Circle 'No' if you would prefer to remain confidential. )

YES NO

**This form is available from: [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/aboriginalcommunities.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/aboriginalcommunities.htm)**



### **Appendix 3: Sample press release**

## **Good fences make great neighbours at Queanbeyan**

A clean-up of Aboriginal-owned land in Queanbeyan has so far removed an Olympic pool's worth of waste and collected 960 litres of recyclable plastic, glass and paper.

The joint project with the Ngunnawal Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), Queanbeyan City Council and Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) has enormously changed the 94-hectare site.

The project has also involved the Rural Fire Service, local residents association Jerrabomberra Residents' Association, Bushcare and Landcare groups, and Readymix.

"It's been a fantastic effort from everyone involved," DECC Director General Lisa Corbyn said.

"Not only has the site been cleaned up, new measures have been put in place to keep dumpers out in the future.

"All of Queanbeyan will benefit from the clean-up of this area and the removal of things like car bodies, which are not only a blight on the landscape but can be harmful to the environment."

The project was coordinated by the Mirrabee Clean Up Working Group and was funded by a \$50,000 grant to the Ngunnawal LALC from DECC's Sustainability Programs Division.

So far project personnel have:

- removed enough garbage to fill an Olympic sized pool
- set aside mountains of steel and metal for recycling
- recycled 960 litres of plastic, glass and paper
- reused concrete and rubble for erosion control measures
- built gates and fences around the site to stop illegal dumping, made up of bollards, mounds and boulders.

The Clean-Up Group is also working with Queanbeyan Police to develop surveillance measures for the site, including motorbike surveillance.

Acting Mayor of Queanbeyan, Councillor Tom Mavec, said he was proud to see such a worthwhile project being implemented in his area.

"It's more than a fence that's been built through this project, it's a whole network of local relationships between community groups that will survive long after this project is finished," Cr Mavec said.

Ngnunawal LALC representative Brendan Moyle said: "The Mirrabee project has provided the Ngunnawal LALC and the broader community with the chance to work together and develop partnerships in the spirit of goodwill and reconciliation."

[Provide name and phone number of someone the media can contact if they need more information. Provide photos with captions if available.]



## Appendix 4: Example of a progress log sheet

Date	Task no.	Description*	Participation and involvement	Outcome
16/01/08	1	A site assessment was done by driving around the site, taking notes and photographs, and marking hotspots on a map.  Plan developed	4 members of the project team	Fences and gates to be constructed as identified on map.  Clean up 2 asbestos dumps.  1 other area will be cleaned up.
27/01/08	2	Meeting with stakeholders to present the completed site assessment, discuss the best way to tackle the project, decide how funds will be spent and assign roles and responsibilities.	8 representatives from local council, neighbours and the community	Stakeholders are in communication.  Tasks have been assigned to stakeholders.
24/02/08	3	OH&S training delivered by TAFE. Training was delayed by two weeks because TAFE teacher was ill. Participants demonstrated their newly acquired knowledge during a competency test at the end of the course.	11 volunteers	11 volunteers trained and received OH&S certificate.
05/03/08	4	Council prepared two vandal-proof gates in their workshop and volunteers helped the council representatives to install them. Council tools and equipment were used. Done according to plan and budget.	6 volunteers 1 supervisor 2 council representatives	2 gates installed.
20/03/08	5	Construction of the fence was delayed by one week due to difficulties accessing council machinery. Construction took longer than expected (5 days instead of 4) due to the hardness of the soil and broken machinery.	7 volunteers 1 supervisor 2 council representatives	500 m fence built and installed.
07/04/08	6	Asbestos was removed according to Workcover requirements. Volunteers were issued with their own personal safety equipment.	6 volunteers 1 supervisor	2 tonnes of asbestos removed safely and disposed of to a licensed waste facility.
26/04/08	7	Community clean-up day to clear illegally dumped waste. It rained so fewer participants than expected. One volunteer found an old driver's licence in a pile of domestic waste, which we reported to the local council.	20 community members	5 tonnes of mixed waste placed in a skip bin and taken to landfill.  3 tonnes scrap metal recycled.  1 incident of illegal dumping reported to local council.
27/06/08	8	Closing ceremony delayed because Elder was unable to attend. Photographs taken of the works completed. A press release was submitted to the local newspaper.	25 stakeholders and community members	1 article in <i>The News</i> . Stakeholders expressed an interest in working together again.

\* There may be delays, problems and changes to your project. Note all changes, good or bad, in this column. This will help you compile your final report at the end of the project.



